## REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-17, 19-27 and 38-67 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-3, 5-17, 19-27 and 38-67 have been rejected.

Claims 1, 8, 19, 51, and 61 have been amended.

### *Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)*

Claims 1-20, 22-31, 33-38, 40-48, 50-58, and 60-67 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Publication No. 2001/0014097, listing Beck, et al. as inventors ("Beck") in view of TCP/IP Illustrated, Volume 1: The Protocols ("TCP/IP"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

In regard to claim 1, the proposed combination of Beck and TCP/IP fails to disclose a virtual link bundle. Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the claimed virtual link bundle provides redundant connections between the claimed first network device and the claimed virtual network device. No such teaching is provided by the cited portions of Beck or TCP/IP.

Still in regard to claim 1, the proposed combination of Beck and TCP/IP fails to disclose that the first network device appends a header that identifies a port that received the packet. The Office Action states that a processor node modifies a header of a packet, but admits that the processor node does not disclose appending a header that identifies one of the ports having received the packet. Office Action, p. 3. The Office Action cites the TCP/IP reference's disclosure of a source port number as purportedly supplying this missing disclosure. *Id.* However, a source port "identifies a sending application." TCP/IP, p. 2. "The source port field 36 identifies the TCP port number for the application on the source processor node that sent the data packet." Beck ¶ [0030]. A header that identifies a source port in non way discloses the claimed feature of appending a header that identifies one of the ports that received a packet. Identifying a source port identifies a sending application, which is not the same as identifying a receiving port of a plurality of ports in a first network device. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited portions

of both Beck and TCP/IP fail to disclose appending a header to a packet wherein the header identifies one of the ports that received the packet.

Still further, claim 1 has been amended to recite that "the first one of the communication links and the second one of the communication links provide redundant connections between the first network device and the first virtual network device." Support for this amendment is found, at least, at ¶ [0034] of the Specification. Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references fail to disclose providing redundant links between a network device and virtual network device.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 1 is patentable over the cited art. Claims 2-3 and 5-7 are patentable over the cited art for similar reasons.

Regarding claim 38, the cited portions of Beck fail to teach or suggest sending a first packet via a first link of a virtual link bundle, if a destination identifier associated with the first packet identifies the virtual link bundle, and sending a second packet via a second link of the virtual link bundle, if a destination identifier associated with the second packet identifies the virtual link bundle, where a single network device performs both the sending the first packet and the sending the second packet, the first link is coupled to a first virtual network device sub-unit, and the second link is coupled to a second virtual network device sub-unit.

The Office Action states that Beck's paragraphs [0039-0041] and FIG. 2 disclose that processor node A sends packets to both processor nodes B and C. Office Action, p. 12. The cited paragraphs merely disclose determining whether a connection already exists to forward a received packet, and if not, which processor node in the cluster should be selected to establish a connection for the packet. Nothing in the cited paragraphs or figure teaches or suggests that a network device can send a first packet via one link, a second packet via a second packet, and that both packets are associated with identifiers that identify the same virtual link bundle.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 38 is patentable over the cited art, as are its dependent claims 39-40. Claims 48-50 and 58-60 are patentable over the cited art for similar reasons.

In regard to claim 41, the cited portions of Beck fail to teach or suggest each feature of amended claim 41. As an initial matter, support for the amendments to claim 41 is found, at least, at ¶ [0059] of the Specification. Amended claim 41 recites:

A method comprising:
> receiving a packet, wherein
>> a destination identifier for the packet identifies an interface bundle, and the interface bundle comprises a first interface; and
> detecting whether the packet was received via a virtual network device link;
> dropping the packet from a packet flow being sent via the first interface if the packet was received via the virtual network device link.

The cited portions of Beck fail to teach or suggest "detecting whether the packet was received via a virtual network device link." The Office Action cites paragraphs [0039-0041] of Beck as purportedly disclosing the claimed virtual network device link, without pointing out any specific element in the cited paragraphs. Office Action, p. 13. Applicants respectfully submit that the cited paragraphs do not disclose anything comparable to the claimed virtual network device link. Instead, as noted above, the cited paragraphs merely disclose determining whether a connection already exists to forward a received packet, and if not, which processor node in the cluster should be selected to establish a connection for the packet. Nothing in this determining process teaches or suggests a virtual device network link. It follows that since the cited paragraphs of Beck fail to disclose a virtual device network link, that the cited paragraphs also fail to disclose detecting whether the packet was received via a virtual network device link.

The cited portions of Beck also fail to teach or suggest dropping the packet from a packet flow being sent via the first interface if the packet was received via the virtual network device link. The Office Action states that paragraphs [0039-0041] of Beck disclose that connections are routed to the appropriate processor node (i.e. the packet flow is filtered)." Office Action, p. 13. Applicants respectfully submit that routing connections to a chosen processing node clearly does not teach or suggest dropping from the packet flow being sent via the first interface.

Furthermore, nothing in Office Action or the cited paragraphs of Beck teaches or suggests performing the act of dropping a packet in response to detecting that the packet

was received via a virtual network device link. In fact, as noted, no portion of Beck has been cited as teaching such a virtual network device link.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 41 is patentable over the cited art, as are its dependent claims 42-47. Claims 8-17, 18-27, 51-57, and 61-67 are patentable over the cited art for similar reasons.

Claims 21, 32, 29, 49, and 59 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Publication No. 2001/0014097 issued to Beck, et al. ("Beck") in view of TCP/IP Illustrated, Volume 1: The Protocols ("TCP/IP") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,735,205 issued to Mankude, et al. ("Mankude"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons similar to those set forth above.

## CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application and the claims therein are believed to be in condition for allowance without any further examination and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 512-439-5092.

If any extensions of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) are required in order for this submission to be considered timely, Applicants hereby petition for such extensions. Applicants also hereby authorize that any fees due for such extensions or any other fee associated with this submission, as specified in 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or § 1.17, be charged to Deposit Account 502306.

Respectfully submitted,

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